



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

ROBERT B. NEWMAN, JR.
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

*Department of Military Affairs
Adjutant General's Office
Joint Force Headquarters
202 North 9th Street*

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219

October 13, 2006

Mr. Alex Wallau
President, ABC Network Operations and Administration
ABC, Inc.
500 S. Buena Vista Street
Burbank, CA 91521-4551

Dear Mr. Wallau:

A recent report by Brian Ross that aired on ABC "World News" and "Nightline" showing an attack on a US Army convoy defended by members of the Virginia Army National Guard was both incomplete and misleading. The implication of the story is that soldiers of the 1173rd Transportation Company abandoned the convoy after being attacked, leaving unarmed American contractors at the mercy of the insurgents.

To leave this impression with the American public, despite US Army investigative evidence to the contrary, is unfair to these brave soldiers, and a serious disservice to the American public which looks to ABC for a balanced and accurate report of world events.

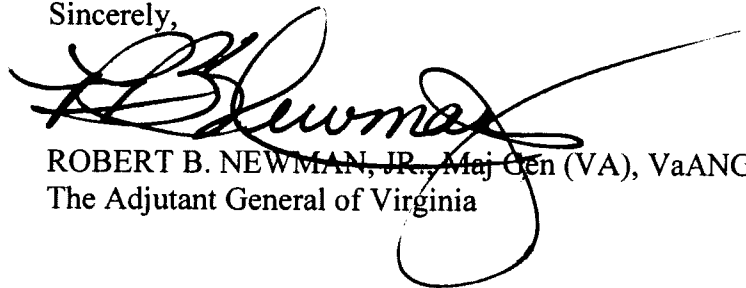
The Virginia National Guard responds immediately to inquiries from the media, as we did in this instance. We were first contacted by ABC News on the afternoon that your program was scheduled to be broadcast. Since this combat action took place in Iraq, we referred your researcher to US Central Command, and your staff was contacted by LTC Michelle Martin-Hing, Public Affairs Officer, Multi-National Corps-Iraq. LTC Martin-Hing researched the investigation that was conducted by the military immediately following the ambush and responded to ABC News in less than a day. However, it appears ABC News could not wait one day to broadcast a report on a military action that occurred more than one year ago and deliberately chose instead to air a biased and incorrect report.

The conclusion of the Army investigation, which eventually appeared only on your web site after this story was broadcast to millions of Americans, found that the soldiers of the 1173rd followed Army doctrine during the engagement and performed heroically to counter the enemy attack and rescue the survivors. It is clear that anyone who watched Mr. Ross's report drew a totally different conclusion about the incident, a conclusion that frames the conduct of the Virginia Guardsmen as cowardly and self-serving. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As Adjutant General of Virginia, I deeply resent the implication of cowardly behavior by these brave soldiers—an implication conveyed by a lack of in-depth investigation by your news organization and an apparent rush to make a news deadline.

Knowing the full content of the report and recognizing the importance for a nation at war to have full confidence in its fighting men and women—and the thoroughness and objectivity of its media—I call upon ABC to broadcast the full facts of the engagement, which will clearly show the bravery and professionalism of these young Americans. I can assure you that in doing so, you will demonstrate to the American public the integrity of your news organization and recognize the true service of the soldiers of 1173rd Transportation Company.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. B. Newman, Jr.', is written over the typed name and title.

ROBERT B. NEWMAN, JR., Maj Gen (VA), VaANG
The Adjutant General of Virginia

CC: Governor Timothy M. Kaine
Ms. Anne Sweeney, co-chair, Disney Media Networks and president,
Disney-ABC Television Group
General John P. Abizaid, Commander, U.S. Central Command
Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, Chief, National Guard Bureau